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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 000448

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/RA, NEA/ARP, S/CT, DS/ITA, AND DS/IP/NEA

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [EFIN](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY PROGRESS

REF: A. STATE 63901

[B](#). MANAMA 411

[C](#). MANAMA 264

[D](#). MANAMA 235

Classified By: CDA Robert S. Ford for reasons 1.4(b)(d).

SUMMARY

1.(C) On March 22, Bahrain's legislature approved ratification of the international conventions on the suppression of terrorist financing and terrorist bombings. According to the GOB's top international lawyer, the GOB has sent three other counterterrorism agreements to parliament for approval to ratify. The lawyer said Bahrain is drafting a new counterterrorism law based on Canada's and South Africa's laws because they criminalize all terrorist acts listed in the 12 international conventions. The GOB believes this approach will win National Assembly approval. END SUMMARY.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES RATIFICATION OF TWO COUNTERTERRORISM CONVENTIONS

2.(U) The press reported that Shura Council voted on March 22, in favor of Bahrain's ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terror and the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. During discussion of the conventions, newspapers reported that some members said that there should be a clear definition of what constitutes a terrorist organization. One paper quoted First Vice-Chairman Abdul Rahman Jamsheer as saying, "Organizations such as Hamas, for example, are considered terrorist organizations by the U.S. and other Western countries but not in the Arab World. A clear distinction should be made between groups like Hamas which are fighting against occupation and others like Al Qaeda, which are involved in international terror and don't enjoy popular support in Bahrain or most of the Arab World." The press also reported that Member Faisal Fulad said that steps should be taken to protect Islamic banks and institutions, to prevent them being victimised and to protect one of the most important business sectors in Bahrain.

3.(U) According to the press, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr. Mohammed Abdul Ghaffar, who represented the government during the debate, said the agreement would not prevent aid from reaching people in genuine need. However, he reportedly cautioned that "Bahrain must follow international standards when it comes to providing financing for the Palestinians or other similar causes because we don't want the funds to be used for anything other their intended purpose which has happened in the past."

THREE MORE CONVENTIONS SENT TO PARLIAMENT

4.(C) Director of Agreements and Treaties for the Directorate of Legal Affairs Jameel al-Alawi (strictly protect) told P/E Chief that once he receives the paperwork on the two agreements from the National Assembly, his office would prepare them for signature by the King. He did not expect this to take long. Al-Alawi added that the government has forwarded to the National Assembly for authorization to ratify the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons Including Agents, the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf. Al-Alawi said the government has not yet begun the bureaucratic process for sending the Convention against the Taking of Hostages and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material to the parliament for approval to ratify.

NEW COUNTERTERRORISM LAW BEING DRAFTED

5.(C) After the brief on the progress on CT convention accession, al-Alawi volunteered out of the blue that he is involved in the drafting of a new counterterrorism law that is based on the Canadian and South African versions of the Commonwealth model counterterrorism law. Al-Alawi said that unlike the Jordanian or Moroccan counterterrorism laws (which he said he reviewed and rejected as inadequate models), the Commonwealth model is comprehensive in criminalizing every

offense catalogued in the 12 international CT conventions. The government, he said, hopes to have the law ready to go to the National Assembly once Bahrain has acceded to all 12 conventions. The GOB has adopted this approach, al-Alawi said, to forestall parliamentary argument against the law. The government believes it will be easier to overcome opposition when it can point to the National Assembly's previous votes in favor of accession to the conventions.

COMMENT

6.(C) After months of pressing the GOB to move forward on both ratification of the counterterrorism conventions and the drafting of counterterrorism legislation, this is welcome news, especially if the new counterterrorism law criminalizes planning a terrorist act. END COMMENT.

FORD